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October 16, 2004

The Federal Advisory Committee
Of the NIST Investigation
100 Bureau Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-8611

Dear Committee Member:

The *Skyscraper Safety Campaign* (SSC), as well as the public at large, owes the Federal Advisory Committee of the NIST Investigation a deep debt of gratitude for your hard work and dedication as you pursue the reasons behind the collapse of the WTC and the deaths of so many innocent people on that day of infamy, 9/11/01.

The Professional Advisory Panel of the SSC has reviewed the documents to date from the NIST Investigation. The Panel members have painstakingly analyzed the material and some have created thoughtful and detailed papers which are attached to this letter, which I hope that you may review.

The major issues in the attached writings center on the following three key points:

1. *Character and Intentions of the Report: Research & Fact Finding vs. Forensic Investigation*

Although the report contains a great deal of genuine research and fact finding, we feel that the collection of data cannot take precedence over the investigative intention of the Congressional mandate, the public's demand to know why as well as how the WTC collapsed, and the need to correct errors in order to avoid such catastrophes in the future and to protect and enhance the public welfare. We believe that NIST should aggressively assert itself as the appropriate center for the forensic engineering investigation of construction, fire or egress disasters, using the full powers granted by the Congressional legislation and modeling its roll on that of the National Transportation Safety Board.

Further, we believe that narrative is essential in order to give coherence, logic, and meaning to the assemblage of facts. The progress report is all too often a series of sections filled by dry statement of fact. There is a lack of an investigative narrative built around the investigation objectives and key questions that NIST has delineated. The questions and answers are intrinsically linked to the story of how these buildings were designed, engineered, built and maintained. At the very least, there needs to be a narrative overview.

2. Building Code Requirements, Violations and Interpretations

The issues regarding local building codes and the Port Authority's ability to abrogate them, reinterpret and substitute its own proposal with or without full testing or outside evaluation needs be fully addressed. Critically important aspects of the construction and the subsequent loss of life are connected to designs and decisions made by the PANYNJ including: 1-Structural issues concerning the use of lightweight truss system for floor support as part of the primary structural system, 2-Fireproofing materials, applications, testing, and 3-Life Safety issues concerning egress requirements, stair widths, riser heights, stair location, street egress and enclosure construction.

3. Documentation, Modeling and Testing.

There are serious doubts about the sufficiency of existing fire testing, virtual or real, especially the use of scaled elements, partial and incomplete constructs that do not match complete, in field, building assemblies. Moreover there seem to be an insufficient concern for human behavior scenarios that give needed insight into egress systems operational effectiveness. More complete, thoroughly annotated and analyzed personal interviews could add an important dimension to the report.

We would appreciate it if the Advisory Committee could review these documents and consider incorporating some of their valuable insights into the report of the findings and recommendations of the NIST Investigation.

I look forward to meeting you at NIST on October 19, 2004.

Sincerely,

Sally Regenhard,
Founder & Chairperson
The Skyscraper Safety Campaign